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United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Office of  
Public Affairs

# Selected Speeches and News Releases

August 23 - August 30, 1990

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## USDA ANNOUNCES PREVAILING WORLD MARKET PRICE FOR UPLAND COTTON

WASHINGTON, Aug. 23—In a July 16-Aug. 10 national referendum, egg producers voted to eliminate the refund provision from the egg research and promotion order, the U.S. Department of Agriculture announced today.

Daniel D. Haley, administrator of USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service, said 84 percent of the egg producers voting in the referendum approved an amendment to the order eliminating the refund. Their vote represented 93 percent of the volume of eggs produced by all voters in the first three months of 1990, he said.

For the amendment to be adopted, at least two-thirds of the voting producers, or a majority of producers representing at least two-thirds of the volume of eggs produced by all voters, had to approve. Commercial egg producers owning over 30,000 laying hens between Jan. 1 and March 31, 1990, except those producing hatching eggs, were eligible to vote.

As a result of the referendum, producers with more than 30,000 laying hens will continue paying 5 cents per 30-dozen case of commercial eggs on a nonrefundable basis to the American Egg Board. The board uses these assessments to finance research and promotion projects, including nutrition education and consumer awareness. Producers in Hawaii and Alaska are not affected by the order.

Another consequence of the referendum is that the escrowed funds, held by the board pending the outcome of the voting, will revert to the board to augment its activities, Haley said.

The egg order is authorized by the 1974 Egg Research and Consumer Information Act.

Clarence Steinberg (202) 447-6179

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**EGG PRODUCERS VOTE TO ELIMINATE REFUND PROVISION  
IN FEDERAL EGG ORDER**

WASHINGTON, Aug. 23—Under Secretary of Agriculture Richard T. Crowder today announced the prevailing world market price, adjusted to U.S. quality and location (adjusted world price), for Strict Low Middling (SLM) 1-1/16 inch (micronaire 3.5-4.9) upland cotton (base quality) and the coarse count adjustment in effect from 12:01 a.m. Friday, Aug. 24, through midnight Thursday, Aug. 30.

Since the adjusted world price (AWP) is above the 1988, 1989, and 1990 crop base quality loan rates of 51.80, 50.00 and 50.27 cents per pound, respectively, the loan repayment rates for the 1988, 1989 and 1990 crops of upland cotton during this period are equal to the respective loan rates for the specific quality and location.

The AWP will continue to be used to determine the value of upland cotton that is obtained in exchange for commodity certificates. Because the AWP in effect is above the established loan rate, loan deficiency payments are not available for 1990-crop upland cotton sold during this period.

Based on data for the week ending Aug. 23, the AWP for upland cotton and the coarse count adjustment are determined as follows:

Adjusted World Price	
Northern Europe Price .....	79.91
Adjustments:	
Average U.S. spot market location .....	13.17
SLM 1-1/16 inch cotton .....	2.15
Average U.S. location .....	0.35
Sum of Adjustments .....	<u>-15.67</u>
ADJUSTED WORLD PRICE .....	64.24 cents/lb.
Coarse Count Adjustment	
Northern Europe Price .....	79.91
Northern Europe Coarse Count Price .....	<u>-76.46</u>
	3.45
Adjustment to SLM 1-inch cotton .....	<u>-4.10</u>
	-0.65
COARSE COUNT ADJUSTMENT .....	0 cents/lb.

The next AWP and coarse count adjustment announcement will be made on Thursday, Aug. 30.

Charles Cunningham (202) 447-7954

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## **FOREST SERVICE WILL AUTHORIZE MT. GRAHAM TELESCOPE CONSTRUCTION**

WASHINGTON, Aug. 23—George M. Leonard, associate chief of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Forest Service, announced today that, due to the requirements of the Arizona-Idaho Conservation Act of 1988 (the "Conservation Act"), the Forest Service has decided to authorize the University of Arizona to complete construction of three telescopes on Arizona's Mount Graham. The University believes that these telescopes will significantly advance the state of astronomical science.

"Because the Mt. Graham site falls within the habitat of the Mt. Graham red squirrel, a species listed as endangered by the Fish and Wildlife Service, special considerations apply to the project under the Endangered Species Act and the Conservation Act," Leonard said. In the Conservation Act, Congress provided that the consultation requirements of section 7 of the Endangered Species Act are deemed satisfied as to the construction of the three telescopes. Therefore, the U.S. Departments of Agriculture and Justice have concluded that the Conservation Act does not provide for additional consultation with the Fish and Wildlife Service at this time regarding the impact of the three telescopes on the squirrel.

Consultation will be re-initiated, however, should the project result in an incidental "taking" of squirrels greater than that permitted by the Fish and Wildlife Service biological opinion that was adopted by Congress in the Conservation Act. "As a practical matter, this means that the project would be halted and consultation re-initiated if the project resulted in more than six squirrels being harmed in any year," he said. In 1984, the University of Arizona proposed construction of a worldclass observatory on Mount Graham, located on the Coronado National Forest in Southwestern Arizona. The sponsors of the \$200 million observatory include the Smithsonian Institution, the Vatican and the Max Planck Institute of West Germany. The Conservation Act contemplated that the University would build an additional four telescopes after the first three, subject to the ordinary consultation requirements of the Endangered



Species Act. Today's action does not address any future construction beyond that mandated by Congress with regard to the first three telescopes.

“The Forest Service will carefully monitor and report on the squirrel population to the Fish and Wildlife Service. We will also re-initiate consultation with the Fish and Wildlife Service should more than six squirrels be “taken” in any year as an incident to the construction project. Moreover, in response to a biological update recently issued by the Fish and Wildlife Service and in order to protect the squirrels’ habitat, the Forest Service will impose further restrictions on activities in a “buffer zone” surrounding the observatory site,” Leonard said. That update indicated that the squirrel population is more dispersed below the mountain top than previously believed. In addition, the Forest Service will continue to take other appropriate steps to protect the squirrel’s viability and will work closely with the University and the Fish and Wildlife Service to mitigate the potential impacts of this statutorily-mandated project on the squirrel.

Len Carey (202) 475-3782

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## **FIRST STEP TAKEN TOWARD A WILT-RESISTANT NORWAY MAPLE**

WASHINGTON, Aug. 27—Norway maples that will not succumb to a sometimes deadly disease, Verticillium wilt, are now a distinct possibility, according to two U.S. Department of Agriculture scientists.

Norway maples—graceful, compact trees that thrive in urban areas—are one of the five most popular street and shade trees in the United States. Unfortunately, these trees are often damaged or killed by Verticillium wilt, which is caused by a fungus that lives in the soil.

But Alden M. Townsend and Lawrence R. Schreiber of USDA’s Agricultural Research Service have found hope of one day being able to develop a Norway maple that will withstand the disease.

“Right now, when a tree has the disease, all you can do is prune out infected parts, water and fertilize the tree and hope for the best,” said Townsend, a plant geneticist at the U.S. National Arboretum here.



So Townsend and Schreiber, who is in the ARS Nursery Crops Research Laboratory in Delaware, Ohio, screened the 13 common varieties of Norway maples for signs of natural resistance to the wilt.

They found two varieties—Jade Green and Parkway—that were not so much resistant as they were tolerant to the fungus.

Technically, being able to withstand the presence of the fungus is considered tolerance, while resistance would be if the organism were not able to infect the tree at all, Townsend explained.

“Jade Green and Parkway Norway maples were able to harbor the same level of infection by the fungus while showing significantly fewer signs of the disease when compared to the most susceptible varieties—Crimson King and Greenlace,” Townsend said.

It was the wide variation in the trees’ responses to infection that Townsend found most encouraging.

“The amount of variation means that there is definitely potential for improvement by selective breeding—potential to breed a Norway maple that will not be damaged by Verticillium wilt,” Townsend said. Such a breeding program is a possibility for a future project at the arboretum, he said.

One finding that surprised Townsend was how long the fungus itself could survive.

“We were able to find the fungus in the trees more than a year after we inoculated them,” he said. “We had expected that the fungus would live only a few months at most and certainly not after a winter.”

He said the ability of the fungus to survive so long suggests that breeding a tolerant Norway maple is as important as finding a treatment.

Kim Kaplan (301) 344-3932

#

## USDA RELEASES COST OF FOOD AT HOME FOR JULY

WASHINGTON, Aug 27—Here is the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s monthly update of the weekly cost of food at home for July 1990:

Cost of food at home for a week in July 1990

	-----Food plans-----			
	(In Dollars)			
	Thrifty	Low-cost	Moderate cost	Liberal
Families:				
Family of 2 (20-50 years)	47.60	60.00	73.80	91.50
Family of 2 (51 years and over)	45.20	57.60	70.90	84.80
Family of 4 with preschool children	69.50	86.50	105.50	129.50
Family of 4 with elemen- tary schoolchildren	79.60	101.70	126.90	152.80
Individuals in four-person families:				
Children:				
1-2 years	12.60	15.30	17.80	21.60
3-5 years	13.60	16.70	20.60	24.70
6-8 years	16.60	22.10	27.60	32.20
9-11 years	19.70	25.10	32.20	37.40
Females:				
12-19 years	20.60	24.60	29.70	35.90
20-50 years	20.60	25.50	30.90	39.40
51 and over	20.40	24.80	30.60	36.50
Males:				
12-14 years	20.50	28.40	35.40	41.50
15-19 years	21.40	29.40	36.40	42.30
20-50 years	22.70	29.00	36.20	43.80
51 and over	20.70	27.60	33.90	40.60

USDA’s Human Nutrition Information Service computes the cost of food at home for four food plans—thrifty, low-cost, moderate-cost, and liberal.

Sue Ann Ritchko, administrator of HNIS, said the plans consist of foods that provide well-balanced meals and snacks for a week.

In computing the costs, USDA assumes all food is bought at the store and prepared at home. Costs do not include alcoholic beverages, pet food, soap, cigarettes, paper goods, and other nonfood items bought at the store.

“USDA costs are only guides to spending,” Ritchko said. “Families may spend more or less, depending on such factors as where they buy their food, how carefully they plan and buy, whether some food is produced at home, what foods the family likes, and how much food is prepared at home.”

“Most families will find the moderate-cost or low-cost plan suitable,” she said. “The thrifty plan, which USDA uses to set the coupon allotment in the food stamp program, is for families who have tighter budgets. Families with unlimited resources might use the liberal plan.”

To use the chart to estimate your family’s food costs:

—For members eating all meals at home—or carried from home—use the amounts shown in the chart.

—For members eating some meals out, deduct 5 percent from the amount shown for each meal not eaten at home. Thus, for a person eating lunch out 5 days a week, subtract 25 percent, or one-fourth the cost shown.

—For guests, add 5 percent of the amount shown for the proper age group for each meal.

Costs in the second part of the chart are for individuals in four-person families. If your family has more or less than four, total the “individual” figures and make these adjustments, because larger families tend to buy and use food more economically than smaller ones:

—For a one-person family, add 20 percent.

—For a two-person family, add 10 percent.

—For a three-person family, add 5 percent.

—For a five- or six-person family, subtract 5 percent.

—For a family of seven or more, subtract 10 percent.

Details of the four family food plans are available from the Nutrition Education Division, HNIS, USDA, Federal Building, Hyattsville, Md. 20782.

Johna Pierce (301) 436-8617

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## **BENNETT VIEWS INTERAGENCY STRIKE FORCE FIGHTING DRUG WAR ON PUBLIC LANDS IN KENTUCKY**

WASHINGTON, Aug. 28—William J. Bennett, director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP), visited the Daniel Boone National Forest in Kentucky today to see first hand the results of a Kentucky-based interagency marijuana strike force operation.

According to F. Dale Robertson, chief of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Forest Service, Bennett's visit highlights the efforts of the Forest Service, Department of Defense, and other federal agencies to cooperate with the states in combating marijuana cultivation on federal forest lands.

Robertson said that the Forest Service is concerned about the environmental and safety threats created by the production of this illegal crop. Marijuana growers are frequently armed and often place booby traps within their cultivation sites, making it dangerous for forest visitors to use these public lands. Booby trap use has increased drastically in the last two years on the Daniel Boone National Forest. Thirty-three booby traps were discovered in the forest in 1988; 145 in 1989. In addition, the unregulated use of pesticides, rodenticides, and other chemicals by marijuana growers contaminate soil and water and kill animals that ingest the poisons.

Bennett and Robertson said that credit for the drug war successes on forest lands goes to cooperative interagency forces such as the one in Kentucky, called 'The Governor's Marijuana Strike Force'. Sponsored by Kentucky Governor Wallace G. Wilkinson, members include the Governor's Office For a Drug Free Kentucky, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Kentucky Army National Guard, the Civil Air Patrol, the Forest Service, the Kentucky Sheriffs Association, the Kentucky State Police, the Attorney General's Office of the State of Kentucky, Kentucky Fish and Wildlife, the Kentucky Water Patrol, and the U.S. Attorney's Offices in the Eastern and Western Districts of Kentucky.

The Daniel Boone National Forest had the largest production of cannabis in the national forest system last year. One third of the marijuana grown on national forests has been discovered on the Daniel Boone. Out of 429,000 illegal plants destroyed last year, 158,000 were on the Daniel Boone at 1,480 separate sites.



It appears that 1990 will break previous records for marijuana grown on the Daniel Boone National Forest, Robertson said. By late August this year, over 160,000 plants had already been destroyed at 680 different sites. Bennett, who spent the day with the strike force surveying fields of 12-15 foot high marijuana plants, called the strike force's work on the Daniel Boone National Forest "vital". "Our national forests and other public lands were not established to be used as private drug farms by gangsters," Bennett said. "They were set aside for the safe and lawful enjoyment of ordinary Americans. This operation, and others like it around the country, are designed to insure that federal land remains what it should be—off limits to drug dealers. This Kentucky operation is an excellent example of multi-agency cooperation in our national war on drugs."

Tom Fields, operations leader for Governor Wilkinson's Marijuana Strike Force, was encouraged by Bennett's visit. "Growing marijuana on federal and private lands is a tremendous problem in Kentucky and we're delighted that we are working together to get a handle on the situation," he said.

For more information about Forest Service involvement in the Kentucky strike force, contact Ed Few, Branch Chief, Law Enforcement Operations, Forest Service, USDA, at (703) 235-8094.

Ann Matejko (202) 475-3787

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## **USDA AMENDS PORK INSTITUTIONAL PURCHASE SPECIFICATIONS**

WASHINGTON, Aug. 28—Effective Oct. 1, the U.S. Department of Agriculture will amend the Institutional Meat Purchase Specifications (IMPS) for fresh pork to reflect public interest in pork with lowered fat content.

The new amendment limits external fat to no more than one-quarter of an inch on all skinless cuts, and adds several cuts that will be practically free of all external fat.

"This change also will add several new items to the specifications institutions like schools, hospitals and the armed services use in buying cuts of fresh pork," said Daniel D. Haley, administrator of USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service.

The added items include “pork ham, inside, tied;” “pork shoulder, Boston butt, boneless, special;” and “pork loin chops, center cut, one muscle, boneless.” These items, which must be practically free of all external fat, reflect new interests of wholesale buyers, Haley said.

IMPS provide institutional buyers of meat and their suppliers a common language with which to write contracts.

IMPS include three sets of specifications. One set, “General Requirements,” provides guidelines for refrigeration and packaging. A second set is a group of eight descriptions of fresh beef, lamb, veal and calf, pork; cooked and cured beef, cured pork, variety meats and sausage products. Each of the eight is titled by a series number. Series 400 covers fresh pork. The third IMPS set, “Quality Assurance Provisions,” is a guide for using samples to determine a product’s acceptability.

Developed in conjunction with trade organizations such as the National Association of Meat Purveyors (NAMF), the amendment takes into account comments received from procurement and production segments of the pork industry since IMPS Series 400 was published last January.

“The amendment to the pork IMPS is one more instance of USDA’s responding to public interest on food issues,” Haley said.

To allow the industry time to prepare for implementing these new specifications, copies of the amendment and of the IMPS themselves are available now from Michael L. May, Chief, Standardization Branch, Livestock and Seed Division, AMS, USDA, Rm. 2603-S, P.O. Box 96456, Washington, D.C. 20090-6456; telephone (202) 447-4486.

Clarence Steinberg (202) 447-6179

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## **TOBACCO INSPECTION ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO MEET SEPT. 19**

WASHINGTON, Aug. 28—The National Advisory Committee for Tobacco Inspection Services, which advises the secretary of agriculture on the level of inspection services to be maintained and the fees to be set for the services, will meet on Wednesday, Sept. 19, at 10 a.m. in the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Regional Tobacco Training Laboratory, 333 Waller Ave., Lexington, Ky.

The agenda includes discussion of burley sales schedules and related matters for the 1990-91 auction season.



The meeting is open to the public. Anyone who wishes to address the committee should contact the director, Tobacco Division, AMS, USDA, Rm. 502 Annex, P.O. Box 96456, Washington, D.C. 20090-6456; telephone (202) 447-2567. Notice of the meeting will be published in the Aug. 28 Federal Register.

Written statements may be submitted to the same address before or after the meeting, or may be given to the chairman of the committee at the meeting.

Clarence Steinberg (202) 447-6179

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## RECYCLING LEATHER WASTE HAS DOUBLE BENEFIT

WASHINGTON—A way to recycle chromium waste from leather production—a waste that tanneries now ship to landfills—is being patented by U.S. Department of Agriculture scientists.

Chromium is applied to animal hides, in the form of chromium sulfate, as a tanning agent that stabilizes and preserves the hide. Tanneries have independent laboratories test landfill wastes to insure that chromium levels are within acceptable levels set by the federal Environmental Protection Agency.

A shortage of landfills is making it increasingly difficult to deposit the more than 56,000 metric tons per year of chromium waste coming from tanneries. About 90 percent of U.S. tanneries use the chemical, which was first used by the tanning industry in the late 1800s.

But, a technique for separating chromium from the waste now “gives tanneries an alternative to waste disposal while allowing the chromium to be re-used,” said Maryann Taylor of USDA’s Agricultural Research Service.

Taylor, a research chemist, and her co-inventors, Edward Diefendorf, George C. Na and William N. Marmer developed the technique at the ARS hides, leather and wool research laboratory in Philadelphia.

Pfister and Vogel Tanning Co. of Milwaukee and two other American tanneries have signed research agreements with ARS to further develop the technology. Robert M. Good, director of research and development for the Milwaukee company, said chromium recycling will “keep our by-product from taking up valuable space in landfills.” He said the company is considering licensing the technology.

Taylor said the technique separates chromium from leather waste known as chrome shavings. Leather trimmed to a desired thickness creates shavings similar to what occurs when a board is planed. She said the technique also can be applied to other chromium-containing tannery waste.

The U.S. Patent and Trademark Office granted Taylor's patent application special status for early review based on the innovation's ability to protect the environment, said ARS patent advisor David R. Sadowski.

Taylor said lab research also showed that "a protein product results from the separation and should be usable in other ways."

Because of its high-nitrogen content, the protein in the hide has potential as a fertilizer and in animal feed additives or a cosmetic ingredient, she added.

To separate chromium from the hide, the leather shavings are suspended in water with a low-base level (pH ranging from 9.0 to 10.5), Taylor said. The mixture is heated to 140 to 145 degrees F for about one hour.

She said a bacterial enzyme commonly used in laundry detergents is added to the mixture, which then is held for two hours at the same temperature. A chemical reaction results in a protein solution and a solid suspension of chromium. The solid chromium can be separated from the protein by filtration or centrifugation.

Other separation methods have been developed by German scientists, Taylor said. However, those treatments require heating the solution to a boil and cooling it to 130 degrees F before the enzyme is added.

Bruce Kinzel (301) 344-2739

Issued: August 28, 1990

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## **USDA TO REPLENISH FOOD SECURITY WHEAT RESERVE STOCKS**

WASHINGTON, Aug. 28—Secretary of Agriculture Clayton Yeutter today announced that the quantity of wheat in the Food Security Wheat Reserve (FSWR) will be increased on Sept. 28 from its 60-million bushel current level by the quantity of uncommitted wheat owned by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Commodity Credit Corporation on that date.



“The Food Security Wheat Reserve has been used when wheat stocks were low and it is prudent to replenish it with higher wheat stocks due to a bumper wheat harvest,” Yeutter said.

The FSWR was established Jan. 15, 1981, with 147 million bushels of CCC-owned wheat, the maximum authorized for the reserve. The wheat in this reserve may be used only in accordance with specific statutory provisions to provide emergency food assistance to developing countries.

Bruce Merkle (202) 447-8206

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## **USDA ISSUES PRELIMINARY ANNOUNCEMENT OF PRICE SUPPORT LOAN AND PURCHASE LEVEL FOR 1990-CROP SOYBEANS**

WASHINGTON, Aug. 28—Secretary of Agriculture Clayton Yeutter today issued a preliminary announcement of the price support loan and purchase level for 1990-crop soybeans of \$4.50 per bushel. The final announcement will be made by Oct. 1.

Yeutter said that a marketing loan program will not be implemented for the 1990 crop of soybeans.

All producers of 1990-crop soybeans will be eligible for loans and purchases. Soybeans are ineligible for any reserve program or farm storage payments.

A regulatory impact analysis on the 1990 soybean program may be obtained from: Director, Commodity Analysis Division, USDA/ASCS, Room 3741-S, P.O. Box 2415, Washington, D.C. 20013.

For additional information, contact Orville Overboe, (202) 447-4418.

Bruce Merkle (202) 447-8206

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## **USDA ANNOUNCES PREVAILING WORLD MARKET RICE PRICES**

WASHINGTON, Aug. 28—Under Secretary of Agriculture Richard T. Crowder today announced the prevailing world market prices of milled rice, loan rate basis, as follows:

- long grain whole kernels, 8.18 cents per pound;
- medium grain whole kernels, 7.22 cents per pound;
- short grain whole kernels, 7.16 cents per pound;
- broken kernels, 4.09 cents per pound.

Based upon these prevailing world market prices for milled rice, rough rice world prices are estimated to be:

- long grain, \$5.14 per hundredweight;
- medium grain, \$4.65 per hundredweight;
- short grain, \$4.63 per hundredweight.

The prices announced are effective today at 3 p.m. EDT. The next scheduled price announcement will be made Sept. 4 at 3 p.m. EDT, although prices may be announced sooner if warranted.

Gene Rosera (202) 447-7923

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## **FOUR MEAT INSPECTORS CONVICTED IN BRIBERY AND CONSPIRACY CASE**

WASHINGTON, Aug. 29—A U.S. federal court has convicted four former federal meat inspectors on two felonies each for accepting bribes in a meat-adulteration conspiracy, according to Dr. Lester M. Crawford, administrator of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food Safety and Inspection Service.

The former inspectors—Carmen Iezzi, Julian Drinkard, James Siliciano, and Henry Hodoruk—pled guilty to charges of accepting \$10,000 to \$30,000 in bribes for failing to take proper action when the Sandy Mac Food Co., of Pennsauken, N.J., produced adulterated and misbranded hams, Crawford said.

Iezzi, Drinkard, and Siliciano were each fined \$10,000, and Hodoruk was fined \$8,000. Hodoruk and Drinkard were each sentenced to one year in prison with that term suspended. Iezzi was given a one year suspended prison sentence, and ordered to report to a community half-

way house for two months. Siciliano was sentenced to two years in prison with that term suspended, but must report to a community half-way house for 6 months. All four were placed on probation for three years, ordered to perform 200 hours of community service, and required to pay \$100 in special assessments.

“The fines reflect the seriousness of the crime and violation of the public trust,” Crawford said. “Meat and poultry inspectors, like all federal employees, are accountable for obeying the law and maintaining the highest ethical standards.”

In all, six meat inspectors were indicted in the Sandy Mac case. They resigned from their positions in October 1989. In May, a federal jury acquitted two of the inspectors.

In October 1989, Sandy Mac pled guilty to charges of bribing federal meat inspectors, “watering down” and mislabeling hams, and falsifying federal records. The company agreed to pay a \$1 million fine. In addition, Merton Zitin, president of Sandy Mac, has agreed to pay \$500,000 in fines, and Michael Zitin, vice president, and Robert Zitin, treasurer, both agreed to pay \$250,000 each in fines. As required by the plea agreement, the Zitins sold their interest in the company in September 1989.

The convictions result from an investigation initiated by FSIS in 1987 into possible adulteration and mislabeling of meat products produced by the company. In 1988, USDA’s Office of the General Counsel referred the case to the U.S. attorney’s office in Camden, N.J., for prosecution. USDA’s Office of Inspector General entered the investigation when allegations were made against USDA employees.

The Food Safety and Inspection Service and its 9,000 employees ensure that meat and poultry products are safe, wholesome and accurately labeled.

Jim Greene (202) 382-0314

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## **USDA SEEKS NOMINATIONS FOR NATIONAL ANIMAL DAMAGE CONTROL ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

WASHINGTON, Aug. 29—The U.S. Department of Agriculture is soliciting nominations for members to serve for two-year periods on the National Animal Damage Control Advisory Committee (NADCAC). Selections will be made to provide the broadest possible representation on the committee.

NADCAC advises the secretary of agriculture on policies and programs needed to control depredating animals that threaten U.S. agricultural and natural resources, as well as public health and safety. NADCAC works with USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service and provides information, opinions and recommendations to the secretary. The committee also serves as a public forum enabling those affected by animal damage or by animal damage control programs to have a voice in the program's policies.

Nominations from interested organizations and individuals should be sent by Sept. 28 to Gary Larson, Director, Operational Support Staff, ADC, APHIS, USDA, Room 821, Federal Building, 6505 Belcrest Road, Hyattsville, Md. 20782.

Notice of the closing date for submitting nominations is being published in the Aug. 29 Federal Register.

Amichai Heppner (301) 436-5222

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## **USDA CONTINUING FOREIGN ANIMAL AND POULTRY DISEASES ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

WASHINGTON, Aug. 29—The U.S. Department of Agriculture is soliciting nominations for new members to serve two-year terms on the Advisory Committee on Foreign Animal and Poultry Diseases. Selections will be made to provide the broadest possible representation on the committee.

The advisory committee works closely with USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service and informs the secretary of agriculture on means to prevent, suppress, control or eradicate outbreaks of foot-and-mouth disease and other destructive foreign animal or poultry diseases in the event such diseases should enter the United States.



The committee helps APHIS prevent the introduction of exotic diseases which could jeopardize U.S. agricultural and livestock production. The committee also monitors national control efforts and provides the secretary with technical information on disease control and eradication programs.

Nominations from interested organizations and individuals should be sent by Sept. 28 to Dr. M. A. Mixson, Chief Staff Veterinarian, VS, APHIS, USDA, Room 747, Federal Building, 6505 Belcrest Road, Hyattsville, MD 20782.

Notice of the closing date for submitting nominations is being published in the Aug. 29 Federal Register.

Amichai Heppner (301) 436-5222

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**THIS WEEK’S HONEY-LOAN REPAYMENT LEVELS  
UNCHANGED**

WASHINGTON, Aug. 30—Producers may repay their 1989 honey price-support loans at the following levels, according to Keith D. Bjerke, executive vice president of the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Commodity Credit Corporation:

**Weekly Honey-loan Repayment Levels, color and class, cents per pound, 1989 crop Table**

White .....	40.0
Extra-light Amber .....	37.0
Light Amber .....	36.0
Amber .....	35.0
Nontable .....	33.0

The weekly repayment level for 1990-crop honey is 38.0 cents per pound for all colors, table and nontable grades.

Levels are unchanged from those announced last week.

Producers who redeem their honey pledged as loan collateral by repaying their honey-price support loans at these levels may not repledge the same honey as collateral for another loan.

Jane K. Phillips (202) 447-7601

John C. Ryan (202) 447-8207

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# Background

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U.S. Department of Agriculture • Office of Public Affairs

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## THE ABC'S OF BIOTECHNOLOGY AT USDA

### DEFINITION

Agricultural biotechnology is a collection of laboratory techniques such as genetic engineering, used by scientists to improve plants, animals and microorganisms. Employing biotechnology, researchers have produced virus-resistant varieties of cucumbers, tomatoes and potatoes; better vaccines and diagnostic kits used for horses, chickens and swine; and even new and improved varieties of commercial flowers.

### USDA'S MULTIPLE ROLES

The U.S. Department of Agriculture plays a number of roles in agricultural biotechnology, supporting and encouraging various initiatives and ensuring biotechnology is developed safely. To help fulfill the objectives, 11 agencies participate in biotechnology activities—the Agricultural Research Service, Cooperative State Research Service, Forest Service, Cooperative Extension Service, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Food Safety and Inspection Service, Agricultural Marketing Service, Economic Research Service, National Agricultural Library, Office of International Cooperation and Development, and the Foreign Agricultural Service.

The Office of Agricultural Biotechnology coordinates the diverse programs and activities conducted by these agencies. OAB also supports the Committee on Biotechnology in Agriculture, which provides a policy review mechanism for USDA. In addition, it is OAB's responsibility to manage and support USDA's Agricultural Biotechnology Research Advisory Committee, which consists of more than a dozen experts in biotechnology who review the safety of certain research proposals.



## **PUTTING SAFETY FIRST**

Scientists conduct field tests only after they have completed years of research in a laboratory, usually followed by more research in a greenhouse. Because safety of people and the environment is a top priority at USDA, strict regulations and guidelines must be followed before certain organisms or products can be tested outside. The Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service manages and enforces these regulations. APHIS requires individuals to obtain a permit to conduct field tests. Since 1987 when the regulations went into effect, APHIS has issued more than 90 of these permits.

Moreover, USDA is developing a set of guidelines its researcher agencies will use to help assess safety and risk prior to approving specific field tests. These guidelines are now in the final stage of clearance and should be appear soon in the Federal Register for public comment.

A third safety mechanism is carried out by the National Biological Impact Assessment Program (NBIAP), established under the Cooperative State Research Service. NBIAP features an electronic bulletin board with 14 databases that contain the latest information on safety, research, field tests and regulations. It is easily accessible through a toll-free phone number. NBIAP also has a permit application generator which uses artificial intelligence to assist principal investigators in the design of safe field tests with plants, animals, and microbes.

## **TARGETING RESEARCH**

USDA strongly supports basic and applied research in biotechnology, allocating \$110 million for the effort in fiscal 1990. The Agricultural Research Service is USDA's principal research agency. ARS is using biotechnology to reduce and eliminate the effects of pollutants in soil and water; develop crops that adapt to drought, cold, heat and toxic soil minerals; enhance the effectiveness of beneficial insects; and improve the safety and quality of processed and unprocessed foods.

USDA's Cooperative State Research Service also supports research programs that use the new tools of biotechnology. For example, CSRS is using a technique called "cell fusion" to produce a potato that resists various diseases. With the potato industry registering losses of \$100-\$200 million annually over the last 10 years due to diseases, such research has high priority.



At the Forest Service, scientists are hot on the trail of the gypsy moth, using biotechnology to put together a complex system of genetic messages that would instruct the young larvae to stop growing and reproducing.

Other USDA agencies are involved in projects which include understanding the socio-economic impacts of the new technology, planning for the smooth transfer of the technology to affected groups, and developing international exchanges and standards of safety.

For more information about biotechnology at USDA, call the Office of Agricultural Biotechnology at (202) 447-9165.

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